

Commissioner Deborah A. Gist's Weekly Field Memo
Friday, July 29, 2011

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Attachment to this field memo:

2012 Teacher of the Year application

Action Item Calendar

Sunday (July 31): Fire, evacuation, lockdown drill reports due

Notes from Commissioner Gist:

1. Districts encouraged to nominate candidates for Teacher of the Year

One of the highlights of the school year for me is the annual selection of the Rhode Island Teacher of the Year. Every year, we at RIDE are delighted to recognize one of our great teacher for the excellent work they do every day in the classroom, the school, and the community. The Teacher of the Year attend a White House recognition ceremony in the Rose Garden and will have a wonderful opportunity to serve as an ambassador for the teaching profession at many public events across the state and even across the nation. In fact, our 2004 Teacher of the Year, Kathleen Mellor, had the honor of being selected as the National Teacher of the Year!

This fall, RIDE will bring together a team of distinguished educators to select the Rhode Island 2012 Teacher of the Year, based on an application, letters of recommendation, and personal interviews. The pool of candidates will include the local Teachers of the Year from each LEA. If your LEA has not already done so, I *strongly encourage* you to participate in the Teacher of the Year program by selecting a local Teacher of the Year and submitting a nomination for the Rhode Island Teacher of the Year. The Teacher of the Year program is the most widely recognized and prestigious award program for teachers, and I want to make every effort to ensure that Rhode Island participates actively in this program and that all of our excellent teachers have an opportunity to earn this honor. My goal is to have a Teacher of the Year from every district in our state!

I am attaching the 2012 Teacher of the Year application to this field memo. We expect to have this application posted on our Web site on Monday, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/Recognition/default.aspx>

The Rhode Island Teacher of the Year applications are due at RIDE on Friday, **September 16**. Please contact me if you have any questions.

2. Warwick signs on as “early adopter” of educator-evaluation system

We are thrilled to announce that during the coming school year the Warwick Public Schools will be an “early adopter,” taking on the challenge of full implementation of the educator-evaluation system. Early-adopter districts will provide a case study of how to successfully implement all components of the evaluation system, collect data on the experiences of educators using the system, and adapt the model to make it work within the specific context of their districts and schools. The experiences and insights of the early-adopter districts will drive our efforts to refine the model in preparation for the 2012-13 school year. We are still confirming a second early-adopter district. Thank you, all Warwick educators, for your help in this vital initiative!

3. Educator Evaluation Web pages redesigned

Based on your feedback, the Educator Evaluation team is reorganizing the educator-evaluation Web pages. Our hope is that it is now much easier for you to find training registration, guides, and materials. The new pages will be available on Monday, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/EducatorEvaluation/>.

4. WaterFire to honor Rhode Island teachers

I am really pleased to let you know that WaterFire Providence is planning a special “salute to Rhode Island teachers” during a WaterFire event on Saturday, August 13. WaterFire and its corporate sponsors, Bananagrams and Friendly’s Ice Cream, are inviting a group of award-winning educators to lead a “torch procession” at 9 p.m. This event is a wonderful gesture from the arts and business communities to recognize excellent teachers and to honor all educators for the hard work we do in our schools and districts every day. If your schedule allows, I hope you can stop by during the event and join us for a recognition ceremony at 9 p.m. at the foot of Steeple Street. Let’s all show our support for the great teachers we have here in Rhode Island!

From RIDE:

5. Summer Food Service Program site list available

Please see this notice from our Office of Statewide Efficiencies:

The Summer Food Service Program is in full swing. This USDA meal program is open, at no cost, to children through age 18.

Please click on this link to find Rhode Island meal sites:

[http://www.esnacs.ride.ri.gov/esnacs.aspx/Documents_Manager/2011 Summer Meal Site Listings_1000.pdf](http://www.esnacs.ride.ri.gov/esnacs.aspx/Documents_Manager/2011_Summer_Meal_Site_Listings_1000.pdf)

If you have any questions, please contact Sandra Fabrizio, at 222-4682 or Sandra.fabrizio@ride.ri.gov.

6. Housing-aid forms past due

Please see this notice from our Office of Statewide Efficiencies:

In earlier messages, districts were notified about the deadline for submission of housing-aid forms, which was July 22. If your district is among those that have not submitted the forms, your district will not be eligible for reimbursement on construction projects.

An individual e-mail has been sent to the business managers in those districts from which we have not received the forms. If you have received a notice that we have not received your housing-aid forms, please submit the required forms so that your district doesn't lose the opportunity for reimbursements for which you may be eligible. For detailed information, instructions, and forms please see:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Finance/Funding/construction/default.aspx>

7. RIDE to provide informational documents about new graduation requirements

Please see this notice from our Office of Multiple Pathways:

RIDE will be sending out letters, FAQs, and brochures that contain detailed information regarding graduation requirements for the Class of 2014 and beyond. We want to be sure to provide you with these documents to support your communication efforts regarding changes in the graduation requirements. We are asking all high-school principals to send responses to the following questions to Karsten Cash (Karsten.Cash@ride.ri.gov) so that we can be sure principals get the documents they will need:

- What are the dates of your freshman orientations?
- How many students are in your Class of 2014 and 2015 cohorts?

You may direct any questions to Karsten Cash as well. Thank you for your assistance with this request.

8. Training for educator evaluators is under way

Please see this notice from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

We are so pleased to let you know that Module 1 training for evaluators is well under way across the state. This week alone, we held seven sessions and trained

approximately 130 educators. Module 1 training sessions will continue through September 8. The survey information we're gathering suggests that evaluators are becoming more comfortable with the model and are more knowledgeable about the support they'll be given, as well as about how gradual implementation will give them time to learn the new system. Our goal is that the level of confidence will continue to increase as the modules unfold and everyone begins to implement the process.

Please keep in mind that you may train approximately 4 educators per building in your district. You can encourage union leadership to attend in addition to those who will be responsible for conducting the evaluations. Currently, most districts appear to have full teams registered for Module 1 training. We will send you more specific data next week to let you know how many people are registered for Module 1 training in your district. We encourage you to take the following steps to ensure that your district is fully prepared for gradual implementation:

- Identify, by role, who is allowed to participate in evaluations. Primary evaluators have the authority to sign-off on an evaluation. Complementary evaluators have the authority to participate in the evaluation, (e.g. conduct observations, review artifacts, assist with goal writing), but cannot sign-off on the final summative rating.
- Identify who, by name, the Primary and Complementary Evaluators will be in each school in your district and send written notice to them to make certain they are aware of their role.
- Ensure that your district evaluators know what training they need as well as what the expectations are for them to coordinate the evaluation processes in their respective schools.
- Ensure that each person is registered by the end of August and attends Modules 1 and 2 by the end of September. Keep in mind that part of each district's obligation to ensure fair and accurate evaluation processes is to guarantee that every evaluator completes all training successfully.

We appreciate your assistance as we prepare for the exciting year ahead of us. Please don't hesitate to call Mary Ann Snider (222-8492) or Lisa Foehr (222-8809) if you have questions.

9. RIDE seeks candidates who will serve on loan as intermediary-service providers on evaluation

Please see this notice from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

We are committed to providing you with the very best support possible as you implement the educator-evaluation model in your district. In addition to the training

modules, guide books, and webinars that we will offer administrators and teachers, we are committed to developing a cadre of *Evaluation Intermediary Service Providers* (Evaluation ISPs) to provide on-the-ground support to you.

We would like to supplement our newly identified Evaluation ISPs with teachers and administrators currently working in your district. Our intent is to replicate the model we're using for Induction Coaches – that is, hiring the very best applicants to be released from their districts for two years so that they can be trained to provide support to districts across the state. There are two options:

- Releasing an administrator for 90 days each year. We would provide funding for your district to hire a retired administrator to work with the released administrator in order to provide seamless services during their absence.
- Releasing an administrator for the entire year. We would reimburse your district for their salary during this period.

The application packet can be found at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/EducatorEvaluation/Docs/ISPEvaluation.pdf>.

The deadline for applying is **August 12**.

If you are interested in supporting your own part-time or full-time ISP by supplementing your RTTT ISP funds, please call Mary Ann Snider, at 222-8492, or Lisa Foehr, at 222-8809.

Please share this information, and we encourage you to support applicants from your district. We understand that it is difficult to release a highly capable teacher or administrator, but we believe the investment you will be making in their growth and understanding of the evaluation model will be beneficial in the long run.

10. PARCC seeks feedback on Model Content Frameworks

Please see this notice from our Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum:

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) has developed the Model Content Frameworks for English Language Arts (ELA)/Literacy and Mathematics. The Model Content Frameworks are documents in both ELA/Literacy and mathematics that: help identify the big ideas in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for each grade level, help determine the focus for the various PARCC assessment components, and support the development of the assessment blueprints. The model content frameworks are designed to be used by state- and district-level curriculum and instructional leaders, as well as by teachers. The model content frameworks are voluntary and are not intended to be curricula or scopes and sequences, but rather to support states and districts in their own curricular development efforts by providing more detail about the standards and their connection to the PARCC assessment system.

PARCC is seeking feedback from a wide group of interested parties, but particularly teachers, on all parts of the frameworks (including the introductions and the grade-level analyses, which include suggested areas of emphasis and priority). This feedback is especially important as the Model Content Frameworks are set to be completed in early fall. The frameworks have already undergone several rounds of review and revision by representatives from PARCC states, including Rhode Island, as well as by key organizations and stakeholders.

The model content frameworks and the review forms will be posted for public review on the PARCC Web site (www.PARCCOnline.org) on Wednesday (August 3), along with an online survey for submitting feedback. They will be posted through August 17.

From other state agencies:

11. Rhode Island PBS makes digital-media platform available to all Rhode Island schools

Please see this message from Dr. María Velásquez, of Rhode Island PBS:

I would like to welcome you to America's largest classroom, PBS LearningMedia, a national network and a new next-generation public-media education platform for PreK-16 classrooms. This digital-media platform is currently accessible to every district, every school, every teacher, and every student in the State of Rhode Island in time for the 2011-12 school year. To create an individual account at no cost, please visit:

<http://ri.pbslearningmedia.org/>

Rhode Island PBS LearningMedia is a new digital-media platform that will help you re-invent classroom learning, transform teaching, and increase students' motivation, creativity, and engagement. It is a central stop and national network system offering supplemental curriculum-based content and online professional development through the integration of the PBS Digital Learning Library teachers' domain content

The site offers the "Latest RI Education News," a customizable station space that allows school districts and individual school administrations to post special events and education happenings. For information on posting requirements, please call me at 473-7517, ext. 365.

I hope you enjoy this robust digital-learning resource!

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Commissioner/fieldmemos/default.aspx>